

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 22, 2006

CONTACT: Mike Brown, 614-645-6428
CDDC, Stephanie Tresso, 614-221-2885 x15
City Council, Scott Varner, 614-645-6798
Battelle, Mark Berry, 614-424-5544

MAYOR COLEMAN ANNOUNCES STREETCAR WORKING GROUP

(COLUMBUS) Moving forward on the potential for a new, rail streetcar system to reconnect downtown neighborhoods, housing, jobs and attractions, that was first unveiled during the State of the City Address, Mayor Michael B. Coleman today announced the creation of the Streetcar Working Group. This group will bring together local leaders, stakeholders and a variety of experts to determine the costs, benefits, funding options and challenges of a streetcar system through a series of stakeholder meetings, public town hall meetings and consultant reports.

“We are opening a new public debate and researching the facts, so that this community can make a solid decision on whether or not streetcars are a smart solution for parking and transportation challenges in our downtown,” said Mayor Michael B. Coleman. “I am proud that so many people have stepped forward to serve on this committee, because it shows just how strong the public’s interest has grown. This team has high standards and will be able to tell us if streetcars are the right, affordable option, and if they can be a useful tool in improving our local business environment and reconnecting our neighborhoods to downtown.”

The new, 38 member task force is being chaired by Retired Admiral Dennis McGinn, Senior Vice President of Energy, Transportation and Environment Division of Battelle, and has community vice-chairs Kate Anderson and Floyd Jones of the Dispatch Companies.

“I’m very honored that the Mayor has asked me to chair this task force,” said Admiral McGinn. “This is an important topic – relating to a vibrant 21st century downtown, and we are pleased to be part of the process.”

The Streetcar Working Group will begin immediately and spend about six months researching five essential questions: Economic Impact; Construction Costs; Operating Costs; a Business Model for Ownership and Operations; Financing Options. The full team will have a series of public meetings and Town Hall meetings to get input from residents and local businesses. The working group also plans to visit other cities which have built streetcar systems around the nation, to see how they systems have affected local businesses and transportation.

The effort is being funded through a partnership of private companies and the City of Columbus, including: OhioHealth, Grange Insurance, Battelle, Nationwide Insurance Company, the Convention Facilities Authority, The Columbus Dispatch

and the Columbus Downtown Development Corporation. The companies have committed nearly \$250,000 to hire the best possible experts and consultants.

The City's downtown is the economic heart of Central Ohio, and has seen significant improvement in the three years since the Downtown Business Plan was launched. Today nearly 110,000 people work in downtown, with another 33,000 students attending classes in the area. An estimated 4,500 people live downtown, with thousands more on the way to fill some 3,800 new condos and apartments being developed. 20,000 people live in the nearby neighborhoods. In addition, 2 million conventioners visit Columbus every year for events in and around downtown.

Appointees to the Streetcar Working Group:

1. Admiral Dennis McGinn, Battelle Memorial Institute (CHAIR)
2. Floyd Jones, Columbus Dispatch (VICE CHAIR)
3. Kate Anderson, Community Representative (VICE CHAIR)
4. Dr. Robert Falcone, Grant Medical Center
5. Brian Ellis, Nationwide Insurance Company
6. David Roark, Grange Insurance Company
7. Bill Jennison, Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority
8. Don DeVere, Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District
9. Otto Beatty, Jr., Downtown Commission
10. Ty Marsh, Columbus Chamber of Commerce
11. Stephanie Hightower, Columbus College of Art and Design
12. Kevin Wood, Downtown Resident's Association
13. Bill Schottenstein, Brewery District Business Association
14. Tim Wagner, Short North Special Improvement District
15. Cleve Ricksecker, Discovery District Special Improvement District
16. Jim Hoppie, German Village Society
17. Bill Riat, Casto
18. Doug Moore, Central Ohio Transit Authority
19. Ahmad Al-Akhras, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
20. Jeff Mathes, Due Amici
21. Michael Wilkos, United Way
22. Paul Astleford, Experience Columbus
23. Marc Conte, Victorian Village Commission
24. Rex Hagerling, Italian Village Commission
25. Pam Foster, Fifth-Third Bank
26. Will Kopp, Columbus State Community College
27. Laura Miller, Downtown Commercial Realtor
28. Pauline Edwards, Franklinton Area Commission
29. Ken Cookson, Discovery District
30. Walt Workman, AFL-CIO Central Ohio Labor Council
31. Reverend David VanDyke, Columbus Downtown Clergy Association
32. Dawn Tyler Lee, The Ohio State University
33. Pasquale Grado, University Community Business Association
34. William E. Carleton, Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board
35. Merle Pratt, MilVets
36. Nancy Duncan Porter, Columbus Museum of Art
37. Marilyn Baker, 1000 Friends of Central Ohio

38. Bertha Duran, Columbus Bar Association/Ohio State Bar Association

Biography for Vice Admiral Dennis V. McGinn, USN, Retired

On October 1, 2005, Admiral Dennis McGinn became Vice President and General Manager of Battelle's new Energy, Transportation and Environment Division. He first joined Battelle as in 2002, following retirement after 35 years with the U.S. Navy, during which he served as a Naval Aviator, test pilot and national security strategist. He was the first Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Warfare Requirements and Commander, U.S. Third Fleet, a role in which he greatly advanced joint and naval operational innovation and experimentation. Admiral McGinn serves on many professional, scientific and leadership boards and is currently serving as a Commissioner on the National Commission on Disabled Veterans' Benefits in Washington, DC.